

A New *Anthornis* from Three Kings Islands.

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In listing the birds observed at the Three Kings Islands, Cheeseman (1888, p. 144), who does not include *Anthornis* in his first list, states: "Besides the species named above, another one is common which I failed to identify. It is about the size of the bell-bird, and has much of its appearance and habits, but the under-parts are greyish-white, and the song is altogether different. I regret that I was unable to obtain a specimen, for there is little doubt that it will prove to be an addition to our lists." However, on his second visit Cheeseman (1891, pp. 414-418) makes several references to having found bell-birds in great numbers on both South West and Great King, with no further query. A later recorder, Fraser (1929, p. 154), lists *Anthornis melanura* without critical comment, and describes the bird as plentiful.

In February, 1934, the Auckland Museum Expedition in the auxiliary ketch "Will Watch" also found bell-birds plentiful, but were impressed, as Cheeseman had been, with differences plain to the casual observer. A limiting collecting permit enabled specimens to be taken for the collections of the Auckland and Dominion Museums. An examination of these makes it clear that the Three Kings bell-bird is a distinctive form, differing from those of the main islands in consistent characters which are as well marked as, indeed in some respects more marked than, those that distinguish *Anthornis melanura melanocephala* of the Chatham Islands.

The following list of specimens used in this comparison gives some idea of size differences, and it may be remarked that only slight plumage differences, which have not been fully analysed, can be used to separate the bell-bird populations inhabiting North Island, South Island, Stewart Island, and all the outliers. Even the Auckland Island subspecies is distinguished by very slight and secondary colour tone differences in the metallic feathering.

Anthornis melanura obscura n. subsp.

Adult Male: Generally similar to *A. melanura melanura* but differing in that it is slightly larger, the bills of males averaging 3 mm. longer, and of females 2 mm. The body plumage is dull olive green, with no trace of the yellowish olive found on the underparts of the typical form; forehead, crown, sides of head, and throat are glossed with dull violet instead of bright purple; quills and tail deeper black with much less olive on the margins of the outer webs of the secondaries, patches of feathers on the sides of the breast and the crissum and under tail coverts white tinged with cream. Iris dull red. Feet lead grey. Bill black.

Adult Female: Similar to *A. melanura melanura* but larger and with plumage generally more greenish grey and much less olive brown.

Young: Not collected.

Type: Auckland Museum No. 15.22, ♂, Three Kings Is., February, 1934.

The Three Kings bell-bird is readily distinguishable in the field. Its larger size is apparent if the observer has recently seen the bell-bird of the mainland or islands further south. Against the dull green plumage and black wings and tail, the white pectoral plumes and under-tail coverts offer a more striking colour contrast than do the yellow counterparts of *A. melanura melanura* against its bright olive green. Both sexes of the Three Kings birds have melodious songs, differing from the songs heard elsewhere, but this is characteristic of all isolated groups of *Anthornis*.

	No.	Sex.	Locality	Wing	Tail	Tar.	Toe	Cul.
<i>Anthornis n. subsp.</i>	A.M. 15.22	♂	Three Kings	93	86	27	24	17
	15.23	♂	Three Kings	93	83	27.5	22	17.5
	15.24	♀	Three Kings	82	71	25	23	15
<i>Anthornis m. melanura</i>	15.19	♂	Chickens	90	86	26	22	14
	15.10	♂	Motuihi	92	83	23	22	14
	15.9	♂	Motuihi	90	84	23	21	14
	15.7	♂	Cuvier	92	87	23	20	14.5
	15.8	♂	Little Barrier	90	85	26	21	14
	15.20	♂	Poor Knights	88	79	27	20	15.5
	15.14	♂	Otago	91	82	27	21	14.5
	15.15	♂	Otago	90	84	25	22	14.5
	15.12	♀	Otago	80	70	25	20	13
	15.13	♀	Otago	84	74	25	21	13.5
<i>Anthornis incoronata</i>	C.M. 1093.6	♂	Kaituna	92	87	26	22	15
	1093.7a.	♂	Akaroa	90	78	25	21	15
	1093.7b.	♀	Akaroa	85	73	24	20	14.5
<i>Anthornis incoronata</i>	1093.19	♂	Auckland Is.	91	85	25	22	14.5
	1093.20	♂	Auckland Is.	93	86	25	25	14.5

NOTE.— A.M. = Auckland Museum. C.M. = Canterbury Museum.

REFERENCES.

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